

# Water shortages and conflict assignment

[Art & Culture](#)



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

The risks of water shortages are growing and, as they do, so does the potential for conflict. When patterns of economic development on either side of a political border are uneven, the potential for 'water wars' becomes a growing concern. One rising source of conflict is due to water availability from the Colorado River. For example, the Colorado may cause potential conflict between Mexico and the US in future years. 90% of water is extracted before it reaches Mexico due to its heavy usage; as a result the Mexican government is clearly angered due to the US's excess use.

This tension is further contributed as the US federal government are under pressure to not change water allocation, therefore meaning Mexico will continue to suffer the consequences and continue to extract more than its allocated share from the Rio Grande. Consequently this may affect US-Mexico relations if no change occurs, as a result the water supply from the Colorado may lead to conflict between these two countries.

However, this is unlikely as this could affect relations in terms of NAFTA and reduce the US's spatial division of labor which would increase costs, a consequence no major US Company will want. On the other hand, the Colorado River has potential to cause conflicts within the US. For example, California is accused of using water that increasingly urbanized states may need in the future. This may lead to increased tensions when states who require more water are suffering due to Californians' excess use.

A recent example is Arizona, who is beginning to take their full share of water, meaning farmers in Imperial Valley are being squeezed to supply water to LA and San Diego. This may actually provide conflict between

farmers in Imperial Valley as more states are putting pressure on the Colorado, as a result many farmers will struggle for water in terms of having enough for irrigation and state supply. This could be a very likely outcome if water supplies continue to reduce as localized conflict is often more common than national.

Conflict between states is not a likely possibility because even if Colorado supplies had increased heavy usage, many agreements or amendments (Colorado compact) would be drawn up in order to sustain relations between states as political fallout over water supply may lead to economic development of US states coming to halt, a consequence the IIS government greatly fears. In addition to this, the Colorado has potential to cause huge political conflict between the Native Americans and the federal government.

The Navajo tribe could claim as much as one third of the Colorado, which would theoretically destroy the 1963 agreement, as a result this would lead to all kinds of political outbursts from governors of all states who need to Colorado as the Navajo do not require their full share to sustain a good quality of life. However the argument is that the tribe will sell any additional water for much needed income, as a result a successful legal claim has the potential to cause extreme political conflict between the tribe and IIS state.

Aside from the Colorado, tensions in Africa and the Middle East have a high probability of escalating into conflict? The middle-east and North Africa are probably the driest and most water scarce regions on Earth-with just 5% of the worlds populations and 1 % of freshwater supplies. For example, in countries such as Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia water supply is extremely short,

whilst populations of all these countries are relatively high. Egypt and Ethiopia have almost double the population of Sudan, coupled with Egypt stronger political power conflict between Sudan is unlikely as they do not have the necessary power to come on top.